

Application No. 10/070,795
Amendment Dated September 14, 2005
Reply to Office Action of June 15, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 10-19 and 21-30 are pending in this application, with Claims 10, 16 and 24 independent. By this Amendment, Claims 10-12, 14, 16, 18, 21-24, 26 and 27 are amended, Claims 29 and 30 are added, and Claim 20 is cancelled. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Except as indicated otherwise in the remarks, the amendments are made for the purpose of addressing informalities pointed out by the Examiner or improving the clarity of the claims, and are not required to overcome any prior art. No new matter is added.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's indication that Claims 16-28 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, Claims 16, 20 and 24 are rewritten in independent form as the pending independent claims 16, 10 and 24 respectively. In particular, Claim 10 is allowable as it is amended to incorporate the features recited in Claim 20, which has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Claims 18 and 27 have been amended to depend from allowable Claim 10. Claim 16 is allowable as it is amended into independent form, including all of the features of its base original Claim 10 and intervening Claim 11. Claims 12, 14, 21 and 26 have been amended to depend from allowable Claim 16. Claim 24 is allowable as it is amended into independent form including all of the limitations of its base original Claim 10. Claims 22 and 23 are amended to depend from allowable Claim 24. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits

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that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons discussed herein.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claim 10 stands objected to because of an informality pointed out by the Examiner. By this amendment, Claims 10 and 11 are amended to incorporate the Examiner's suggestion to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 10-15 stand rejected to under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Jones (U.S. Patent No. 5,894,496) in view of Whitmarsh, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,623,226). This rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the reasons set forth below.

The Examiner asserts that the combination of Jones and Whitmarsh would have resulted in the features recited in Claims 10-15. Applicant notes that Claim 10 is amended to incorporate the features of allowable Claim 20, now cancelled. Applicant agrees with the Examiner that Claim 20, which is now independent Claim 10, contains allowable subject matter. Claims 11 and 13 depend from Claim 10, and are also believed to be allowable at least based on their dependencies. Claims 12, 14 and 15 have been amended to depend from Claim 16, which has also been indicated as containing allowable subject matter by the Examiner. Therefore, Claims 12, 14 and 15 are also believed to be allowable based on their dependencies. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 10-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

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NEW CLAIMS

This amendment adds new claims 29 and 30. Claim 29 recites the features added by Claim 12, but depends from Claim 24 instead of Claim 16. Claim 30 recites the features added by original Claim 16, but depends from Claim 24 instead of Claim 11. Both of these claims are believed to be allowable at least based on their dependency from Claim 24, which has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

CONCLUSION

For at least the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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